The States would be eligible to access the ACA for taking up schemes in agriculture and allied sectors under the RKVY scheme provided they prepare District and State Agriculture Plans and ensure that the baseline share of expenditure in agriculture and allied sectors in the total State's Plan expenditure is at least maintained. The States have been provided flexibility and autonomy in the process of selection, planning, approval and execution of schemes under the agriculture and allied sector. The ACA would be made available to the States as 100% grant. The operational guidelines for implementation of RKVY Scheme have been finalized in consultation with the Planning Commission and issued to the States/Union Territories.

Minimum support price for paddy and wheat

*30. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN:
SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether minimum support price for paddy and wheat has been announced;

(b) if so, whether the minimum support price for paddy is less than wheat;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps taken to increase the minimum support price for paddy?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. The Minimum Support Price (MSP) of paddy for 2007-08 crop season was announced/fixed on 17th May, 2007. Accordingly, the MSP of Paddy (Common) was fixed at Rs. 645 per quintal and of paddy (Grade A) at Rs. 675 per quintal. Subsequently, for paddy an incentive bonus of Rs. 50 per quintal has been announced by the Government on 9th October, 2007 over and above the MSP. The MSP of wheat for 2007-08 crop season was announced on 9th October, 2007 whereby it was fixed at Rs. 1000 per quintal.

The Government decides on the support price for various agricultural commodities taking into account the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP), the views of Central Ministries as well as such other relevant factors which are considered important for fixation of support prices.

The CACP, while formulating its recommendations on price policy considers a number of important factors which include cost of production, changes in input prices, input/output price parity, trends in market prices, demand and supply situation, inter-crop price parity, effects on industrial cost structure, general price level and on cost of living; international market price situation and parity between prices paid and prices received by the farmers.

Economic plan/package for farmers

*31. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any specific economic plan/package for farmers in the country,

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) the details of funds provided or proposed to be provided for the purpose during the last three years and the current financial year; and

(d) the detials of achievements made in this respect?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) There are several Plan schemes in the agriculture sector which benefit the farmers, directly or indirectly, in terms of incentives provided to them such as the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), The National Food Security Mission (NFSM), the Macro Management of Agriculture, the Integrated Scheme of Oilseeds, Pulses, Oilpalm and Maize (ISOPOM), the National Horticulture Mission, the Technology Mission of Horticulture for North-Eastern Region including Sikkim, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir, Micro-Irrigation, the Support to State Extension Programmes for Extension Reforms and the Technology Mission on Cotton. Government has also approved a specific rehabilitation package for farmers in 31 suicide prone districts in four States, namely, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra.

(c) The details of funds provided or proposed to be provided during the last three years and the current financial year under the Plan schemes of the Ministry of Agriculture are as follows:

(Figures in Rs. crore)

Year	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Schemes in Ministry of Agriculture	4,192	5,998	6,927	9,952

(d) Major achievements in the agriculture sector, which have also ultimately benefited farmers, include an increase in production of foodgrains, horticulture products and milk, improved credit flow to farmers etc.

Diversion of wheat supplied to PDS in open market

*32. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Supreme Court has recently asked the Central and the State Governments to follow certain modalities in distribution of wheat through the Public Distribution System to check its alleged diversion for sale in the open market;

(b) whether Government have also received reports that the imported wheat supplied to PDS Centres is being sold in open market;

(c) whether his Ministry has asked the States to enquire into the allegations and communicate to the Centre, the action taken;

(d) if so, what are the details received from the State Governments; and

(e) what are the steps being taken or considered in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. Certain complaints mentioning TPDS wheat (not specifically imported wheat) being sold into open market have been received from some States. They have been sent to concerned State Governments for inquiry and appropriate action.

(d) Reports on Action Taken by State Governments are awaited.

(e) For eliminating such malpractices under TPDS, a 9-Point Action Plan is under implementation in all States and UTs.